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## STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

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APRIL 29, 1944

MAY 24 1944

## LESS GRAIN ON HAND THIS SPRING

April 1 stocks of wheat on farms estimated 218 million bushels or 26 percent of the 1943 crop. A year ago there were around 325 million bushels on farms, 33 percent of the 1942 crop and a record stock for April 1. Total of commercial and farm stocks 542 million bushels against 900 million a year ago. Wheat stocks have been sharply reduced since the first of the year, partly as a result of heavy demand for feed.

Stocks of corn on farms April 1 estimated 1,114 million bushels, 19 percent below the record stocks a year earlier, but about 14 percent above the 1933-42 average. April stocks equivalent to about 40 percent of the 1943 corn crop. Total commercial and farm stocks 1,162 million bushels, against 1,490 million April 1, 1943.

Stocks of oats on farms April 1 estimated 418 million bushels or 37 percent of the 1943 crop, this percentage about the same as last year. Total commercial and farm stocks 445 million against 538 million a year ago.

Farm stocks of soybeans April 1 estimated 40 1/2 million bushels, about 21 percent of the 1943 crop. Like figures last year 54 million bushels, representing about 29 percent of the 1942 crop. Last summer's soybean crop moved from farms considerably earlier and at faster rate than the 1942 crop which was delayed in harvest.

## FEWER CATTLE ON FEED

Number of cattle on feed for market in the 11 Corn Belt States April 1 was about 23 percent smaller than a year earlier. This means between 300,000 and 400,000 fewer head—probably the smallest number on feed in the last six years. The decrease is heaviest in Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas. Decrease reflects greater marketing of fed cattle first three months of this year over last and probably fewer cattle put on feed. However, reduction in cattle on feed this April probably will not mean fewer coming to market, April through June, than was the case last year; feeders' reports indicate that percentage to be marketed these three months will be much the largest in recent years. Cattle feeders reported about as much corn on hand this April as last, relative to number of cattle; (though

corn supply compared with number of hogs and other cattle is materially less than last year).

## HEAVY SLAUGHTER OF HOGS

Hog slaughter under Federal inspection, in March, 7,165,000 head, 54 percent above March last year — largest March slaughter on record, 2 million over previous high in 1928. Slaughter in first quarter of this year was 55 percent above last year. The first six months of this marketing year (October-March) hog slaughter was 37 percent above year previous. Marketings continued heavy in April. Cold storage stocks of lard and rendered porkfat increased in March by 66 million pounds, although lard has been ration point free since March 3. Total stocks lard and fat in storage April 1 were 427 million pounds, compared with 362 million pounds March 1 and 205 million pounds April 1 average of last five years.

## MILK PRODUCTION UP SLIGHTLY

Total milk production on farms in March was slightly larger than in March 1943. The increase in milk per cow last November has been more than expected—reflecting higher prices, better care and feeding and a mild winter. Milk production per cow on April 1, however, was 2 percent lower than a year previous, 14.50 pounds against 14.85 a year ago. Number of milk cows around 2 percent larger this spring than last. On basis of current trend, total milk production in 1944 may about equal last year's output of 118 billion pounds.

Civilian supplies of butter and cheese during April-June will be larger than in first quarter; Government set-aside order on butter only 10 percent this April compared with 30 percent last April; will increase later.

Creamery butter production in February was only about 106 million pounds; on a daily average basis was 16 percent below February 1943, but seasonal increase this spring has been somewhat above normal. Present expectation is that creamery butter output this year will total around 1,600 million pounds, compared with 1,686 million pounds in 1943, reflecting shift toward use of more milk in whole milk products (cheese, evaporated milk, dried whole milk, etc.)

## MORE HENS AND EGGS

Not as many hens culled out of flocks this spring as last. Number of layers on farms declined from 441

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE		PARITY PRICE
	MAR. 15 1944	APR. 15 1944	APR. 15 1944
Wheat, bu. . . . . dol.	1.46	1.47	1.50
Corn, bu. . . . . dol.	1.14	1.15	1.09
Oats, bu. . . . . dol.	.79	.79	.678
Cotton, lb. . . . . ct.	19.97	20.24	21.08
Potatoes, bu. . . . . dol.	1.37	1.37	1.22
Hogs, 100 lb. . . . . dol.	13.10	13.00	12.40
Beef cattle, 100 lb. . . . dol.	12.00	12.10	9.21
Veal calves, 100 lb. . . . dol.	13.30	13.20	11.50
Lambs, 100 lb. . . . . dol.	13.40	13.60	10.00
Butterfat, lb. . . . . ct.	51.1	50.7	<sup>1</sup> 44.3
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb. . dol.	3.27	3.21	<sup>1</sup> 2.55
Chickens, live, lb. . . . . ct.	23.8	23.7	19.4
Eggs, doz. . . . . ct.	30.1	27.1	<sup>1</sup> 30.0

<sup>1</sup>Adjusted for seasonal variation.

million in February to 434 million in March, a net reduction of only 7 million hens, which was small for the period. Number of laying hens on farms this March was 5.5 percent above year earlier. The hens laid an average of 15.6 eggs per bird in March, about 1 percent under record lay year previous. Nevertheless, because of the larger number of hens, egg production in March totaled 564 million dozens, 4 percent above record March output last year and 49 percent above 1933-42 March average. On April 1 eggs in cold storage totaled 4.4 million cases, compared with a previous peak of 3.2 million cases year ago. The refrigerator space is quite fully occupied, especially in the central part of the country.

#### FEWER YOUNG CHICKS THIS SPRING

Reports from hatcheries covering period April 1-15 show 13 percent fewer eggs set and 4 percent fewer chicks hatched than in same period last year. Further decrease indicated for remaining months of the hatching season. Reports suggest that output of chicks during April and May will be only about two-thirds that of same months last year. Should this decrease occur, production of chicks the first five months of this year would be 18 percent under like period in 1943; in other words, it would mean about 876 million chicks this year compared with 1,069 million in 1943. Actual output remains to be seen but all present indications point to materially fewer chicks this year than last.

#### WINTER WHEAT

Winter wheat prospects better from Nebraska southward as a result of heavy rains. In some Plains areas farmers still do not know just how much acreage will make a stand but April reports suggested a crop of around 602 million bushels, which would be 75 million more than was expected last fall. April indications pointed to around 15 percent of winter wheat acreage abandonment; last year about 10 percent of planted acreage was not harvested for grain.

#### COLD STORAGE SPACE

##### STILL WELL FILLED

Crowded condition of freezer space has eased slightly. Of all net piling freezer space in public cold storage warehouses, 87 percent was occupied April 1 compared with 92 percent a month earlier and 61 percent the previous April. Cooler space in public cold storage warehouses was 79 percent occupied on April 1 compared with 74 percent March 1 and 61 percent April 1, 1943. Of such storage space in meat packing plants 93 percent of freezer space and 96 percent of cooler space was occupied

April 1. Packing plants in many States reported cooler and freezer space 100 percent occupied.

#### FEWER HIRED MEN

The number of people working on farms April 1 was 9,080,000 or about 3 percent lower than same date last year. Estimated number of unpaid family workers was 7,401,000 or about the same as the 7,433,000 a year ago. It was about 200,000 or 3 percent fewer than the 5-year average (1935-39) April 1. Number of hired workers on farms this April 1,679,000 or about 10 percent fewer than the 1,875,000 hired hands last year. Number of hired workers this April about 16 percent below the 5-year average. Largest shrinkage is in the West South-central region where the number of paid workers is 25 percent below last year. Farm wages are at an all-time high; wage index stands at 292 percent of the 1910-14 average, 17 points higher than on January 1 and 53 points above April last year. In the Pacific region farm wages have risen 57 points in the year. Average farm wage rate for the United States April 1 was \$3.58 per day without board, compared with a like average of \$2.88 April 1 last year.

#### FOOD PRICES DOWN A LITTLE

Retail cost of a city family's typical basket of foods declined further from \$436 in February to \$433 in March, latter the lowest cost in a year. The total charge for marketing that basket of foods, difference between what the farmer got and what the consumer paid, amounted to \$197 in March. Of this total charge, Government marketing payments made up \$17, with the farm-retail price spread accounting for the other \$180. The farmer's share of the consumer's food dollar amounted to 58 cents in March, virtually unchanged since last August.

#### FARM INCOME

Total income from farm products sold during February, including Government payments, \$1,412 million, compared with \$1,205 million in February 1943. Government payments in February \$78 million, compared with \$79 million previous February.

The January-February total income this year \$3,017 million, which included \$147 million Government payments. Comparable figure for 1943 was \$2,566 million, which included \$179 million Government payments.

For more detailed information, write the Division of Economic Information, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., or telephone Republic 4142-Branch 4407.

CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE		
INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	APRIL 1944
Prices received by farmers . .	1910-14 = 100	196
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	170
Parity ratio . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	115
Wholesale prices of food . . .	1910-14 = 100	163
Retail prices of food . . . .	1910-14 = 100	<sup>1</sup> 173
Farm wage rates . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	292
Weekly factory earnings . . .	1910-14 = 100	<sup>2</sup> 411
RATIOS	LONG-TIME APRIL-AVERAGE	APRIL 1944
Hog-corn ratio, U. S. . . . .	11.9	11.3
Butterfat-feed ratio, U. S. . .	23.9	24.6
Milk-feed ratio, U. S. . . . .	1.16	1.37
Egg-feed ratio, U. S. . . . .	13.8	11.8
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	JAN.-MAR. 1943	JAN.-MAR. 1944
Milk, (Bil. lb.) . . . . .	26.9	27
Eggs, (Bil.) . . . . .	14.9	16.5
Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) . . .	1,441	1,686
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	199	212
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.) . . . .	2,756	4,161

<sup>1</sup>March figure.

<sup>2</sup>Factory pay roll per employed worker adjusted for seasonal variation. February figure.